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Prospects and challenges of school leadership in Pakistan

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(Watkins and Marsick, 1993:97). Senge (1990) has team learning as one of his five disciplines for organisational learning and he puts the argument in these terms:

First, there is the need to think insightfully about complex issues (by tapping) the potential of many minds to be more intelligent than one mind... Second, there is the need for innovative, coordinated action ... where each team member remains conscious of other team members and can be counted on to act in ways that complement each others' actions... Third there is the role of team members on other teams ... a learning team continually fosters other learning teams (pp. 236-7).

There is an important issue here for a workplace learning approach to building the school as a learning organisation. Inherent in the workplace learning approach is the idea of learning from the experience of doing one's job. Such learning is likely to be individualistic unless there are specific moves to encourage teachers to work in teams or collaborative groups. It is necessary, therefore, to design the school as a learning system in such a way that reflection on the work being carried out is broadened to include teamwork.

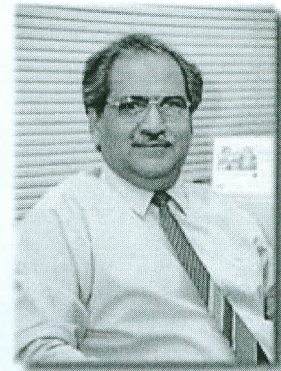
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Prospects and Challenges of School Leadership in Pakistan

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Pakistan is among those less developed countries, which is still grappling with the critical issue of raising percentage of its budget for education. In spite of several commitments by successive governments, there does not seem any substantial increase in the annual budget for education, in general and improving school management and governance capacity at school level, in particular. However, little effort is made to train headteachers but the majority of them lack understanding of their role as 'pedagogical leaders'. To Sergiovanni (1998) pedagogical leaders should be engaged in "developing human capacity by helping schools become caring, focused and inquiring communities within which teachers work together as members of a community of practice". He further adds that "Pedagogical leadership invests in capacity building by developing social and academic capacity for students, and intellectual and professional capital for teachers" (p.37). The governments' existing recruitment and promotion policy reveals that the majority of headteachers are to be recruited or promoted on the basis of their teaching experience rather than

management experience. This indicates that school leadership and management is not yet recognized as a specialized field of study by which a group of educational managers and leaders can be prepared through relevant academic and professional programmes for enhancing their individual and institutional capacity. Given the situation, the majority of schools are functioning without qualified and trained headteachers in Pakistan. This portrays unpleasant scenario of school leadership, which has severe implications for school effectiveness.

Literature on school leadership indicates that the success of any school is highly dependent on the quality of school leaders. Literature has helped us to differentiate between management and leadership but these terms are used interchangeably in our daily discourse. This paper does not aim to discuss these terms; however, I would like to present my point of view about these terms. To me both management and leadership are two sides of the same coin and they are not mutually exclusive. One cannot become effective leader without becoming effective manager. Leaders are engaged in creating teambuilding for promoting accountability and shared decision-making culture so that everyone should be part of 'community of practice'. Whereas managers believe that they are only responsible for managing their schools by maintaining status quo. By making further distinction between these two terms-management deals with operational aspects of schools whereas leadership deals with strategic aspects of schools, which provides a sense of direction in terms of vision, that requires competence, multiple intelligences, and skills.

Effective schools require both good leadership and good management. Literature describes three levels of management- strategic, organizational and operational. *Strategic level* involves translation of vision into broad aims and long

term plans; *organizational level* facilitates conversion of strategic thinking into medium-term objectives supported by allocation of appropriate resources and effective strategies such as delegation of power, shared decision-making; and *operational level* ensures that resources are utilized, and tasks are coordinated, monitored and completed. When managers get mastery over strategic matters they tend to begin performing themselves as leaders.

In the following section, an attempt is made to analyse the nature of headteachers' tasks in line with conceptual framework –strategic level, organizational level, and operational level.

Tasks of School Headteachers

A typical school headteacher is engaged in three types of tasks- academic, administrative, and financial. My personal experience of working with headteachers reveals that majority of headteachers do not have any document indicating their tasks and how to perform them effectively. This adds non-clarity of headteachers' role, which has affected headteachers' performance. A matrix of headteachers is developed by using the above conceptual framework, which is presented below:

Treasure

*Opening the covers of a book
Is like lifting the lid of a treasure chest.
Look inside and you will find
Golden stories and glittering characters.*

*Some are given a map to show them where X marks
the spot.
Some are given the precious key to open up the lock.
Some are helped to lift the heavy lid.
But for some it will remain a buried treasure.*

Gervase Phinn

Matrix of Headteachers' Tasks and Levels

Management Levels	Types of Tasks		
	Academics tasks	Administrative tasks	Financial tasks
Strategic	Nil	Nil	Nil
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working on scheme of studies meeting with teachers on academic matters ensuring review of course work with teachers 	Nil	Nil
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring conduct of transparent and timely examination moderating examination papers ensuring safety of examination record conducting classroom observations ensuring completion of syllabus ensuring arrangements of co-curricular activities attending and addressing school assembly checking teachers' academic diaries checking students' fair note books attending students' annual prize distribution signing results sheets / report cards signing and distributing timetable among teachers distribution of annual course work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring school maintenance, smooth school functioning, cleanliness and discipline checking teachers and students attendance meeting with parents, senior government officials attending meetings of senior governments, public representatives responding to public complains corresponding with government officials, parents and others keeping all relevant records, issuing admission forms, checking teacher daily diaries maintaining muster roll of staff, dead stock register, movement register, general register, visitor book, PTA / SMC meetings record, cash book, token register, inward and outward correspondence register resolving conflict between teachers and teachers, teachers and parents, teachers and headteacher, teachers and students maintaining meeting records with senior government officials, monthly meetings with teachers preparing and updating timetable maintaining personal daily diary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining students fees record ensuring compliance of all official rules maintaining teachers salary record preparing annual budget and keeping its record keeping excess and surrender record keeping sanction of new expenditure keeping budget and expenditure record, ensuring fault free annual school audit keeping monthly expenditure statement, monthly staff return maintaining audit record, bank accounts arranging local, internal audit making compliance of school audit observations keeping donation record signing teachers' salary vouchers / cheques, salary arrears bills timely deposit of students fees in bank account, teachers' un-disbursed salary ensuring monthly bank statement for checking expenditure and balance seeking necessary permission for withdrawal of certain amounts for purchase of school items signing teachers and staff pay rolls

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signing students' monthly result reports, students quarterly, six-monthly and annual result reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining school library record, teachers engagement register, laboratory material record • keeping counterfoils of various school certificates • maintaining teachers leave record, students daily attendance record, teachers personal service record, record of payment of utility bills • sending proposal for teachers' transfer and retention • assessing teachers and staff's annual confidential reports, sending annual confidential reports to the concerned officers, sharing adverse remarks with teachers and ensuring its compliance • maintaining teachers seniority list • recommending awards for teachers and doing follow up • arranging an annual physical verification • preparing teachers leave cases for preparatory retirements • issuing last pay certificate to • apremanding teachers taking disciplinary action against teachers and staff 	
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The analysis of headteachers’ tasks suggests that headteachers’ tasks are predominately administrative and financial. In our study on understating headteachers’ role in Pakistan we found that the majority of headteachers tended to spend more time on dealing with administrative and financial tasks, which substantially affected the quality of education. Matrix analysis also indicates that the majority of headteachers perform their role mainly at operational level, which is more administrative, and managerial role rather than leadership role. This has become more critical for public school systems to understand the complexity of school systems; hence there is a need for policy makers to forge synergy and coherence for developing individual and institutional capacity. This will lead to develop a viable mechanism to promote

leadership in educational system. Despite their heavy administrative work there are few headteachers who still provide academic leadership in their schools and considered to be 'effective heads'. However, few effective headteachers will not deal with the present complexity of school system until the centrality of education leadership for the success of school systems is recognized.

Prospectus

Headteachers do not seem to have tapped their potentials for creating their future. Hence, it is essential that they should participate in professional development programmes for sharpening their skills and competence. In this regard, the public and private sectors have initiated professional development programmes for school leadership for developing effective

management and leadership skills and competence. This will help them to make their schools as 'learning' or 'leadful' schools, which are engaged in expanding their capacity by using generative learning. Holmes (1997) has rightly suggested that 'Today's educational leaders must not only possess the knowledge and skills to meet these challenges but also have the courage, integrity and imagination to find innovative ways to deal with these challenges. Thus, headteachers must go through a major paradigm shift for broadening their vision and mental models. In order to change headteachers' 'personal' and 'professional' vision, they require life-learning approach for becoming 'perpetual learners' (Barth, 1997). Thus leadership requires learning habits and attitudes. Looking at headteachers' task, it appears that headteachers seem to be overloaded with routine tasks which has created dependency culture. In order to come out of dependency culture, headteachers as leaders need to become perpetual learners. School leaders must learn about new leadership and management practices by rediscovering the passion and moral purpose that makes schools as 'learning schools'.

Challenges

Despite their participation in such professional development programmes, majority of headteachers still tend to work as 'managers' rather than 'leaders'. They tend to face numerous challenges that include: imbalanced role of headteachers, lack of clarity and understanding of roles, lack of leadership qualities, lack of effective professional development programmes, lack of professional autonomy, interference of political leaders in school matters, dependency and boss culture, headteachers' recruitment on seniority rather than merit basis, lack of understanding about schools as 'learning schools', and overly use of 'top-down' management model. These challenges have become major 'stumbling blocks' to affect effective leadership at school level.

Conclusion

Keeping in mind the complexities of school governance and management dynamics,

government needs an explicit policy on headteachers' recruitment, promotion and professional development. Traditional ways of managing schools have not been useful; headteachers need to explore alternate ways of managing schools within the government policy framework. I tend to agree with Fullan (1997) that 'We need to move away from the notion of how the principal [headteachers] can become lead implementer of multiple policies and programmes. What is needed is to reframe the question. What does a reasonable leader do, faced with impossible tasks' (p.7). It is my conviction that the schools of 21st century can only be managed by 'pedagogical leaders' who are able to create enabling environment how to learn together so that they are able to create more commitment, passion, competence, confidence, and creativity to handle messiness of complex phenomenon of school as a 'learning schools'. By just adopting these ideas without careful thinking, implementation is bound to fail. No 'silver bullet' will help headteachers to manage their own schools effectively but school leaders must learn from their and others' experiences and shape their own role to make their impossible tasks possible. This will allow headteachers to make their schools as 'effective' and 'learning schools'.

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About SHADE!

SHADE or the School Headteachers Association for Development of Education was formed as a voluntary non-government organization by the headteachers from the public, private and Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan (AKES, P) who were the course participants of the first Advanced Diploma in School Management

Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) from June 1997 to June 1998.

SHADE is established to provide a platform for headteachers to share among themselves common concerns and challenges related to their role and seek help for the development of education in general and for effective school management in particular.

SHADE aims (a) to offer a platform for enhancing the professional knowledge, experiences human and other resources required for the promotion of effective school management; (b) to help the headteachers in mobilizing resources for their professional development; (c) to provide professional support to headteachers for creating a knowledge based school management system; and (d) to establish appropriate communication channels for disseminating information on school improvement.

SHADE intends to promote the professional development of headteachers through the following professional initiatives and activities;

- (a) conducting bi-monthly full day workshops with working and aspiring headteachers for their professional growth and improvement;
- (b) Publishing a half yearly SHADE Newsletter;
- (c) Conducting conferences/ seminars/ symposia; and
- (d) Extending professional support to other educational organizations / institutions.

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